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ABSTRACT

This paper presents background on a non-hierarchical organizational perspective. In addition, it presents guidelines for using a non-hierarchical perspective to create generally acceptable forms of international organizations. The theory on which the non-hierarchical perspective is based maintains that a form of comprehensive global planning without centralized authority will contribute toward more peaceful means of conflict resolution. The hypothesis is that international organizations created along non-hierarchical lines will help alleviate global fears which currently motivate many nations to prefer disorganization to membership in any sort of international organization with the 'wrong people' in charge. Following an overview of limitations of existing political and organizational theories, the paper explains why a non-centralized form of international organization might be successful in solving world problems such as food allocation, regulation of the production and sale of resources, and development of infrastructures to deal with the current global level of economic interdependence. Reasons for this potential success include that national operatives in inter-governmental organizations can function with relative freedom as compared to government representatives working in a bilateral diplomatic situation, and that recent increased emphasis on interaction and consenses among bureaucrats (rather than political representatives) can serve as the beginning of a non-hierarchical communications channel. The conclusion is that national policy makers will be able to create viable international organizations if they stress non-centralized global policy planning. (DB)

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ORGANIZATION THEORY, POLITICAL THEORY, AND THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA: SOME HOPE

BUT VERY LITTLE TIME

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The international system probably is the classic example of the global dilemma of organization we now confront. At a time when it is increasingly obvious that the world as a whole needs more organization, not less, we fear the expansion into yet other realms of the only form of social organization we have known for approximately 6000 years. The working assumption, and virtually everyone shares it, is that organization and structure are impossible unless some individual or group is designated as "in command." Organization is taken to mean hierarchy and, because we fear hierarchy in all its forms, we find ourselves advocating as little organization as possible, in the forlorn hope that it is better to stumble along in a world of disorganization than to take the risk of having the "wrong people" in charge of any new organizations we create. By way of leading into a discussion of inventing forms of international organization we can live with, and there are some very limited grounds for optimism, I outline an organizational perspective which is, at least for the moment, distinctly in the minority.

Organization Theory as Grand Theory

A new administration is just underway in the U. S., and one of its high-level appointees already has expressed a view that demands more intensive analysis than it is likely to receive. United Nations Ambassador-designate Jeane Kirkpatrick made it known early on that she had severe reservations about continued U. S. support of, or even membership in, the United Nations so long as its decisions are contrary to U. S. national interests. When decisions are made by voting, in what we customarily describe as the "democratic" method of making decisions, we do nothing more than design an organizational hierarchy in which the majority represses the minority. The tendency, then, is to believe in decision-making by vote only to the extent that any of us is

aligned with the majority. The "problem" of the U. N., it follows, is that over time, neither that organization nor any other organization that makes its decisions in this manner, including all governments we now label "democratic" or "representative," can survive.

The larger conceptual point is that contrary to what we all have been taught, theories of organization are not derived from theories of politics; all theories of politics are derived from a single theory of organization, one which can be stated in a single sentence. The principle is that no organization (family, church, corporation, public agency, nation-state, or multinational, international, or transnational organization) can achieve its social purposes other than through the interaction of those designated as "superiors" and those labeled "subordinates." Since I have argued this at great length elsewhere,¹ I cannot repeat the argument here. I can only assert that there are absolutely no significant organizational differences among any two or more political theories or theorists, and this assertion emphatically means that capitalism and socialism are organizationally identical. Ideological arguments about the merits and demerits of these allegedly different "systems" are essentially meaningless, the only pertinent arguments concerning degrees of administrative decentralization. Centralization can be capitalist (monopoly capitalism, corporate state) or socialist (state socialism), but partial decentralization can also be either capitalist (United States) or socialist (Yugoslavia). Total decentralization is, in the sense of an absolutely "free market," impossible, the reason for the absence of any such systems in the world. All theories of, and experiments with, decentralization ("markets," "nationalism," "neighborhood control") are attempts to escape the repression of centralized authority by creating many smaller hierarchies and then

compelling them to destroy or steal from each other. Even the most optimistic word associated with politics---pluralism---distresses us for that reason.

In this sense, the system of nation-states is merely another form of decentralized market system. It follows that if every nation-state were socialist, the world as a whole would remain a decentralized market system in which the actors would spend their time seeking to destroy or steal from each other. This, once again, is not a matter of different ideologies. It is important to understand the basic premises of this design and the single overriding function they thrust upon all those designated as organizational "leaders." I rely here upon the work of William G. Scott, one of the best organization theorists around, even if he is largely identified with the academic field of business administration.

Having been an early devotee of "systems theory" as a new and innovative approach to the study and design of organizations, Scott reassessed his position in 1974 and concluded that all contemporary theories of organization reflected "utilitarian beliefs that hold material growth to be efficacious, material abundance to be limitless, and consensus to be the natural manner of human relationships. To put it succinctly, the function of management is to use rationality (which is nothing more than the notion of efficiency, defined as improvement in the output/input ratio) to accumulate organizational surplus from natural abundance, and then distribute that surplus to "buy off internal consensus from the potentially conflicting interest group segments that compete for resources in organizations."² The income that one receives at work, in other words, is nothing more than a bribe which induces one to do what the boss wants done. In the subfield of politics, this is recognizable in the more or less standard definitions of politics as "authoritative allocation of

values" (Easton) and "who gets what, when, how" (Lasswell). Those revered as great political leaders, as in various polls on the ranking of U. S. presidents, are those who seemingly move their countries toward ever greater accumulations of material wealth, principally through colonial expansion and the winning of wars.

If, as I think is the case, the organizational design of hierarchy is the only cause of alienation, then humans have been alienated from each other and from the world at large since the shift from gathering and hunting societies to agriculture and urbanism, a shift that can be conveniently dated as some 6000 years ago.³ While the argument may never be settled in approved scientific fashion, I subscribe to the view of Richard Leakey, among others, that humans lived in organized and structured nonhierarchies in a previous era.⁴ Hierarchy is the origin of the concept of "social distance" between humans, and even of the epistemological notion of "objectivity." In order to explain and justify authority relationships, it was necessary to specify that humans designated as "followers" or "subordinates" must act in response to knowledge that is external to them, knowledge in the possession of designated leaders.⁵ Modern Western thought has contributed only minor variations to this social design, and most of these are nothing more than fictional self-delusion.

The combined effect of the Reformation, the Scientific Revolution, and the Industrial Revolution was merely to shift the presumed knowledge base of authority from moral truth, exemplified by priests and divine-right monarchs, to scientific truth, exemplified by the secular priesthood of intellectuals and managers. Along with this came the mythical doctrine of individualism which holds, in its simplest form, that organizations should be subordinate to individuals, not vice versa. Only a moment's reflection should convince

anyone that the doctrine of individualism is only a mask for the organizational design of hierarchy that remains as well-entrenched as ever. If any individual, labeled "A" for our purposes, makes a decision of any significance, that decision must affect at least one other individual, "B." If B must accept A's decision so as to preserve A's individual choice, then B must, in effect, obey A, thereby acting as A's subordinate. If A could make a decision affecting B only with B's uncoerced approval, then the decision would be collective, not individual. Individualism, then, is merely a false front for hierarchy or, if you will, authoritarianism. To make yet a further case for the universality of the problem we face, I turn to the corollary problems of human motivation and dualism in human nature.

You have been asked, or have asked yourself, "What motivates you (me) to perform this job?" The most typical responses are (1) "Money, to live as well as I can and provide for those who depend upon me"; or (2) "Personal growth, challenging activity, and an opportunity to help mankind." A student might say (1) "To get a good job and begin a successful career"; or (2) "To become a more complete person." Individuals tend to accept the motivations labeled (1) as purposes they are compelled to pursue, but to prefer those labeled (2) as purposes they would choose if they were free to do so. The motivational categories match precisely two major and contradictory definitions of human values. A colleague and I recently studied the work of social philosophers (Erich Fromm, John Rawls), organization theorists (Abraham Maslow, William G. Scott, Frederick Herzberg), and political theorist C. B. Macpherson; we concluded that even if the words differed, all referred to this same dualism in human purposes, and we reduced our findings to this chart:⁶

Rawls	Macpherson	Maslow
Justice as Fairness Utilitarianism	Maximizing Powers Maximizing Utilities	Self-Actualization Overcoming Deficiencies
Herzberg	Scott	Fromm
Motivation Hygiene	Humanism Materialism	To Be To Have

(From Allyn A. Morrow and Frederick C. Thayer, "Materialism and Humanism: Organization Theory's Odd Couple," Administration & Society 10, 1 May 1978.)

The title of Fromm's book, To Have or To Be?⁷ is as direct an expression as any of the contradiction, one not confined to Western or Judeo-Christian traditions. We avoid facing the contradiction, hoping we can both make money and develop as human beings. If we must work for money in order to survive, however, we cannot know if we enjoy what we do, or if we "grow" at work. Buddhists, Platonists, and Aristotelians all "recognize the presence in man of a transcendent spiritual awareness and a tension between that sense of higher destiny and contrary intentions."⁸ Those familiar with Marx's theory of human nature may recognize his parallel distinction between natural (lower) and species (higher) man.⁹ Those who seek to attach words to the higher human values, in philosophical works or written constitutions, use such words as truth, justice, community, fairness, equity, and equality. The lower values, or needs, seem to be those of individuals, the higher values those of communities. As we perused the work of these authors, we concluded that only Maslow and Herzberg concluded that individual humans simultaneously could pursue both wealth and personal development; the others defined the purposes as contradictory, and concluded that if we were to pursue the higher values, we must turn away from the pursuit of material wealth.

I make three brief points about this dualism as we now experience it, the first being that if hierarchy emerged rather quickly in the shift from gathering/hunting to agriculture/urbanism, it is an outstanding example of how a relatively sudden change in environment (and I emphasize social environment here) can profoundly alter human behavior. Indeed, I think a strong case can be made that the theory or doctrine of Creation (or Creationism) is only a metaphor for a behavioral change so profound as to invent a new social species, and that the concept of one God is a metaphor for hierarchy as exemplified by external authority. In this sense, the great religions were the first great nationalisms, and the holy books among the earliest of written constitutions.¹⁰

Second, the invention of hierarchy encouraged humans to obey all commands by authority figures designated as legitimate. In experiments designed to study why Hitler's minions willingly destroyed those in concentration camps, Stanley Milgram found that most humans do anything authority figures tell them to do, an indication that Eichmann was quite normal.¹¹ Born and raised in a world of hierarchy, we should not be surprised if individuals are unable to bring to bear the highest values of ethics and conscience, or if individuals are brainwashed to believe they want to do what they must do. After all, the conventional definition of brainwashing is merely socialization accomplished by organizations of which we disapprove.

The accompanying social theories we have designed to accompany hierarchy, finally, argue that not only are individuals best motivated to perform by a combination of fear of authority and greed for material wealth, but that humans have an insatiable desire to accumulate and consume. This is reflected in such supposedly disparate events as the "Abscam caper," and the recently enacted reform of the U. S. Civil Service. The search of the Federal Bureau

of Investigation for members of Congress with "latent tendencies" to corruption flowed from the premise that if relatively affluent humans are repeatedly offered bribes, they will succumb sooner or later. Jimmy Carter's reform of the Civil Service was based on the twin assumptions that public administrators are so lazy they must be threatened with immediate firing, and so greedy they will respond only to such "positive" motivators as cash bonuses. This reform was enacted by so overwhelming a margin, and to such widespread praise, as to leave no doubt about the underlying theories of human nature which drive our policy processes.¹²

It can be seen from the above that we are currently attempting to bring together two concepts involving infinity. It is believed on the one hand that humans have infinite wants and desires and, on the other hand, that nature is possessed of infinite resources. Strictly speaking, the theory of infinite resources is modified in part by the notion that if any given resource is not in limitless supply, it is possible to infinitely substitute for it. What is becoming clear, but at a much slower rate than I for one would prefer, is that natural resources are very, very finite, and that it no longer makes sense to assume, as the industrialized world has so blithely assumed for so long, that the only impediment to all-out economic growth everywhere is the laziness or ignorance of people in poorer countries.

The prevailing theory has been up to now that if I, say, own an automobile and you do not, the way for you to approach the problem is to get to work, and earn the wherewithal to buy one of your own. If it turns out, however, that by the time you assemble the wherewithal for buying one of your own, there are no longer any to buy, we are left with the question of what happens next? Do I simply keep driving my car while denying you any part of its use, or must we

seriously think about sharing the use of what is available? And, if we are to resort to sharing in such situations, what is left of the notion of private property?

Let me dispel any notion that to mention sharing is to imply the need for some form of socialism as it is conventionally defined. The problem here is that socialists and/or Marxists have some difficulty grasping the idea that a change in officially designated ownership has no effect on the design and functioning of organizations. U. S. management literature has recognized since the early 1930's, e.g., that a shift from family to professional corporate management has left shareholders generally without real authority. In the socialist world, those in charge of decentralized "enterprises" or "plants" (in Yugoslavia), or those in charge of centralized government functions (in the U. S. S. R.) act as though they are plantation owners with full authority to distribute as they please. One astute analyst of the socialist world has recognized this,¹³ but too many have not.

I realize that readers may instantly reject my assertion that the classical economic version of organization theory includes as a working assumption the notion of infinite resources. After all, some may say, economics is the science of allocating scarce resources, and one need only recall such names as Ricardo and Malthus to recognize that economics always has had its share of worriers about limits to resources, especially where such relationships as land and population are concerned. In response to such presumed rejoinders, I must insist that we look at the organizational design of classical microeconomics, based as it is upon the "free market" that is regulated only by the "invisible hand." The closest approach to a long-term policy that relies upon this classical model is anti-trust.

Stated as simply as possible, anti-trust theory begins with the assumption that the classical monopolist restricts production so as to maximize prices and profits. By making certain that he keeps supply below demand, he is able to set prices about as high as he wishes. The anti-trust solution is to insure that he faces as much competition as possible, in the form of other producers (as many as possible) who will not only offer customers viable alternatives but will, because of the competitive situation, have no choice but to lower prices. The desirable outcome is to have greatly increased production which, in turn, will lead to greater consumption by those who can meet the lowered prices.¹⁴ The underlying premise, seldom emphasized, is that natural resources are abundant enough to allow the proverbial "forest of firms" to constantly increase production. I buttress this argument with three additional points.

We face two central premises which directly contradict each other, yet both are widely held to be correct. One, the hallmark of classical economics, is that the greater the competition in the market, the greater the overall efficiency. The second, attributable to classical administration, is that duplication leads only to inefficiency and waste. In operational terms, it turns out that competition and duplication are absolutely synonymous, hence both propositions cannot be correct.¹⁵ Before long, we must consider the likelihood that the classical economic premise is totally in error.

The second point is that the economic concept of scarcity has nothing to do with limits to resources in the world at large. Economic scarcity refers only to the situation facing any individual decision-maker who must "allocate" the resources s/he owns (the individual consumer, e.g.) or has legitimate authority to manage (government decision-maker). As Robert Mundell, whose economic credentials are impeccable, has put it, the economic notion of scarcity is just as applicable to a world of infinite resources as to one of limits:

Even if a man had all the money he could possibly use, his activity would be conditioned by scarcity. He would still have to allocate his time if only because life is limited. In choosing a meal, a man has to take account of the fact that his stomach is limited even if he is rich enough to ignore the expenses of buying the meal.¹⁶

Economics has become the most prominent social science only because it holds out the promise of enabling an individual decision-maker (whether the consumer in the market or the organization leader acting on behalf of members) to be scientifically greedy in deploying his/her resources for maximum benefit.

Finally, there is the underlying economic premise that gets less attention than it should. The classical market includes only buyers and sellers, which is to say that it does not include those who cannot meet the existing market price. If, in principle, the price is as low as possible due to all-out competition, it remains the case that the output of all firms is distributed only to those who can meet that price. Those who cannot buy are simply not members of the market, and I do not think it an overstatement of the Milton Friedman position to note that the corollary assumption is that anyone can find a job that will enable him/her to at least survive. In this version, those who do not give evidence of greed are merely lazy. In any case, market "efficiency" refers only to the allocation decisions made by buyers and sellers, not by those who are not equipped to buy.

All of this is merely prelude to taking a look at what is happening in organization theory and practice, with special reference to international organizations. My intention is to argue that while there are some promising trends, we have so far to go that the trends hardly represent even a substantial first step. If, e.g., resources are indeed limited, then differentials in distribution amount to theft from each other. If there can be no future for the concept of property, this must refer just as much to

national as to individual property. This is not all that startling an assertion, but many are likely to resist, perhaps to the death of everyone, the inevitable demise of the nation-state. While some tend to bid "Farewell to the Nation-State,"¹⁷ even a leading recent textbook on international organizations includes the observation that "the growth of international organizations clearly demonstrates how unsuitable the nation-state is as a unit for dealing with many contemporary problems."¹⁸ The question may be, then, how long we can continue to even pretend that the nation-state is a viable institution, and my answer will be that we have little time but that even the limited progress we are making on the international scene depends for now upon maintaining the pretense that nation-states are viable. Hopefully, what follows will clarify what may appear to be a confused position.

"Open Systems" and "Consensus": Are These the New Beginnings?

If the first of these terms, "open systems," is a conceptual expression based upon one author's observations about how some domestic organizational processes appear to work, the second, "consensus," refers to a mode of decision-making in international organizations that is fast acquiring great prominence. Needless to say, it is necessary to outline the meaning of these terms in a succinct but sufficiently complete manner.

While political theorist Henry Kariel has used "open systems" as the title of a book, and while much of what he writes therein is highly congenial to me,¹⁹ I focus here on the work of the late James Thompson, about as prominent as any sociologist who has spent years trying to understand how organizations function. In his major book, he developed the notion that we no longer can think of any organization as a closed and easily defined social system, but

as one with ambiguous, fluid, and constantly changing boundaries.²⁰ Formal organizations tend to penetrate and permeate each other and, since nation-states are organizations, the basic concept is not very distant from work done by John Herz and Andrew Scott, among others. In studying many operational examples, Thompson later coined the phrase "intensive interdependence."

The underlying premise is that no single organization of any kind accomplishes anything useful by itself, but only inserts itself into virtually an endless series of networks, groups, overlapping policy processes, and multiorganizational or transorganizational connections which, somehow or other, produce the only socially useful outcomes. The individual organization and its leaders may hire and fire, and distribute rewards and punishments, but this organization does not do anything. Thompson was fond of looking at such things as urban redevelopment schemes, noticing an odd mix of governmental and non-governmental, voluntary, business, educational, and many other organizations, all somehow moving ahead toward some vaguely defined purpose. In attempting to set down the most distinguishing characteristics of these networks or systems, Thompson produced two concepts I think worth quoting here:

To the extent that intensive interdependence requires shifting coalitions and the bringing together of strangers, one prominent requirement for the infrastructure is a system of certification which permits organizations which have not had prior experience with one another nevertheless to form new relationships confident in the capabilities of the others. To some extent the specialized organizations themselves may band together to establish standards and certify competence, but both the logic of the situation and our own experience in the United States suggest that such efforts fall short of meeting the demands of others for confidence in the ratings; consequently I believe that the establishment of standards (if not the actual ratings of organizations) becomes identified as a responsibility of the polity and hence as a matter for public administration.

A second characteristic situation for intensive interdependence is the absence or relative unimportance of authority in relationships among the organizations involved. Organizations are brought together because their expert and specialized competences tend to come together as peer organizations - a company of equals. This seems true even when one of them takes the initiative in convening the combine or when one of them has prior access to resources needed by the total (as in the case of a prime contractor assembling a group of subcontractors). With each organization representing specialized knowledge needed by the others, authority is not a viable base on which to pattern relationships.²¹

If both of these characteristics are important, the second is the more so. To indicate why, I must move slightly beyond the limits of Thompson's argument. The crux of his position is that the important results emerge from environments in which nobody is in command, because the necessary knowledge is not concentrated enough to permit the assignment of authority to some over others. It follows, I think, that if authority is absent or unimportant in such systems, authority should not be present or important anywhere. Only by entertaining such questions can we come to grips with what I take to be an inherent contradiction in Thompson's argument (and in the work of many other theorists, among them Harlan Cleveland, Rensis Likert and, before he became a university president, Warren Bennis). If knowledge is not sufficiently concentrated to allow us to assign command in multiorganizational networks, why should we assume it is sufficiently concentrated to leave it in the hands of an individual or a very few individuals in any organization, beginning with the two-person family?

To students of international politics, Thompson's phrase "intensive interdependence" will seem as normal as can be, since few words have greater currency at the moment than "interdependence." And, no matter how vaguely the word is used, all who use it have in mind the underlying premise that it

is not totally compatible with the words "sovereignty" and "independence" as we have come to know them. If decision-making processes are to be based upon the interdependence of multiple actors, then no one of those actors can command the others. The fascinating corollary is that if organizations, in this case, nation-states, are to pretend they are "sovereign" or "independent," they cannot accept their subordination to other nation-states and, if they are to respect those characteristics of other nation-states, they cannot exercise domination. This is wholly pedestrian and insignificant as it stands but, hopefully, the next step in the argument is less so.

In the everyday world, it is customary to assume that among any collection of individuals or organizations, the outcome of having nobody in command is to have no organization or structure at all, or one (and perhaps incorrect) version of anarchy. The normal thought is that organization is hierarchy, but I suggest that the only viable form of organization is structured non-hierarchy, an overly laborious term for which I apologize, but for which I have no quick substitute.²² Thus, the most promising arenas for devising, formalizing, and legitimizing new forms of organization are, I think, four in number. One is almost uniquely the property of the U. S.; a government of separated powers, as in our three branches, can just be easily described as one of shared powers, and this opens the door to decision-making systems in which no one actor is in charge. A second is federalism; while we have tended to define federal systems as those of divided powers, we logically could redefine them also as systems of shared powers. Yet a third is groups or committees of cabinet officers or ministers in any government. One of the oldest traditions around is that no cabinet officer or minister will accept subordination to one of his colleagues, all insisting they respond only to

commands and decisions of heads of states or governments. Thus, a cabinet or ministerial committee will function only if none of its members is designated as being in charge. Since few yet recognize this truth, most such committees fail because of attempts to designate a leader. Contrary to the conventional wisdom which scorns committee decision-making, they can work rather well if no attempt is made to assign authority to one member. In today's organizational world, the word "committee" has fallen into such low repute that "team" or "group" are used as handy substitutes when describing how things get done.

The fourth arena, of course, is the international system, and the only possible way of making decisions in international organizations is by agreement or, if you will, uncoerced consensus. A truly significant example is immediately at hand. The procedural rules of the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea were adopted and amended in 1974 and 1975, and published in 1976.²³ They included the usually extensive provisions about elections, powers of officers, speeches, debates, motions, and voting, those "Robert's Rules of Order" inanities that make the work of all sorts of organizations, from student governments to faculty senates to parliaments in general, uniquely ineffective. Contrary to what many might believe, I assert that decision-making processes are more important than substantive issues, hence I can only applaud the language in a weekly news summary issued in September of 1980:

An agreement that delegates described as a "break-through" on one of the most contested features of a future law of the sea convention was achieved at Geneva during a five-week meeting of the ...Conference... which ended on 29 August...

From the private East-West North-South negotiations on future exploitation...there emerged a unique voting formula for the Council of the projected International Seabed Authority, spelling out how this executive organ would decide on allocating and sharing the still untapped mineral wealth lying below the deep oceans. A key element in the

formula is the extensive use of a consensus procedure to take the place of voting on the most important questions...

Rules and procedures for the future sea-bed mining system... would require consensus---defined as the absence of normal objection.²⁴

To get at the deeper conceptual questions here requires an exploration of the word "consensus," from conventional political and organizational perspectives. In democratic political thought, the concept seems to refer to an initial agreement among members of society on fundamental political values. Because the agreement, or social contract, is developed before political government begins, the agreement is open only to minor revisions or amendment as it is passed along from generation to generation. One result is the "compliance constituting the consensus will usually amount to little more than habituation," and this appears as the "expression of inertia, indifference, ignorance, lack of political or social imagination, or absence of involvement or concern."²⁵ Some political theorists believe this form of consensus should be as narrowly based as possible, so as to afford citizens maximum opportunity to participate in value formation. A secondary definition of consensus, one I shall assert is incorrect, deserves only brief mention. The result of a vote is sometimes said to reflect consensus, or perhaps "consent" as used when the Senate ratifies a treaty.

It is worth noting that with respect to both these definitions, the notion of "voluntary free will agreement" has been a sham all along. While our social contract theories imply that the contracts emerged in pristine form among humans leaving a "state of nature," the agreements were in fact only facades built around hierarchical institutions of long standing. To cite only a single obvious example, the U. S. Constitution was forged by slaveholders who, like the Greeks who invented much of our "democratic"

thought, did not look upon either slaves or women as complete citizens. And, of course, any notion of "one-man, one-vote" is essentially window-dressing when power and wealth are unevenly distributed.

In organizational thought, consensus implies continuing agreement among members on the purposes of a given organization. The agreement supposedly eliminates any tension between individual and organizational purposes, enabling managers to integrate people having different knowledge and skills into one joint venture. This definition assumes that conflict is dysfunctional to effective organizational performance, and it elevates harmony to a positive value.²⁶ Because the consensus emerges within hierarchy, it turns out to be one superiors impose upon subordinates through the use of rewards and punishments. This effectively defines consensus, then, as day-to-day obedience. In a sense, the immediate commands of the designated head of any organization are "Constitutional," and insubordination (merely the operational equivalent of dissent) is punishable by immediate job termination. Within the organizations employing them, individuals do not have anything resembling "human" or "political" rights, something we are now beginning to recognize. The oft-repeated claim that, e.g., the U. S. is more dedicated to such rights than, say, the U. S. S. R., does not stand up to close analysis.²⁷ There are, among both political and organization theorists, alternative views of how decisions should be made, and I take the organizational approach to be more persuasive. I take them up in order.

Some democratic political theorists perceive conflict as desirable in that it enables issues to be decided through debate and voting.²⁸ The difficulty is that because all society is structured hierarchically, political methods of decision-making are hierarchical. Any voting outcome is simply the

repression of some by others, and should not be dignified by the use of such words as "consensus." Some organization theorists, however, seek to substitute conflict and conflict-resolving processes for the traditional organizational norm of consensus as obedience, and they are attacking fundamental paradigmatic premises of society. What they seek is decision processes that bring conflict to the surface, deal with it openly and without mutual threat or coercion, then resolve it. This is sometimes known as "creative synthesis," and with reference to such theorists as Mary Parker Follett.²⁹ As an ardent critic of the baggage of politics, including representative government, voting, parties, even collective bargaining, Follett sought decision processes through which individuals, learning from each other, could produce new social knowledge.

While we have far to go, permit me to use a contemporary educational example to drive home the point. Schools and training institutes offer courses in organization development, group dynamics, and team decision-making. These courses often include such popular exercises as the "NASA Moon Exercise" and the "Desert Survival Exercise." The purpose is not only to demonstrate that group decisions are likely to be superior to individual decisions, but to suggest precisely how group decisions should be made. Almost invariably, the accompanying instructions specify that decisions be made in small groups, usually not to exceed five members, and that voting never be used. The underlying premise is that if we wish to make democratic and participative decisions, we should abandon the methods usually labeled "democratic" (voting and parliamentary procedures).

A Hopeful but Worried Summary

Harold Jacobson's summary view is a bit more optimistic than mine, but perhaps that is only because my premises differ substantially from his:

...humankind is crafting new political institutions that have already contributed significantly to greater global security, to better material welfare through a larger gross world product, and to higher standards of social welfare. ...human beings can use these new political institutions to cope with the problems posed by cascading scientific and technological developments and to improve conditions of life throughout the world still more. The argument is not that the activities of the new political institutions have brought unmitigated good...It is simply that new institutions adequate to the tasks have been put to good use, and that considerable progress has been made...³⁰

Where my optimism accords with Jacobson's is with respect to such factors as the relative freedom with which national operatives can function in Inter-Governmental Organizations as compared to bilateral diplomacy, the formalized involvement of private associations and even corporations, and the increased emphasis upon interaction among bureaucrats rather than political representatives.³¹

Jacobson assumes, however, that "representative" decision-making bodies are different from, and superior to, hierarchically organized organizations, a premise which leads him to conclude that transnational organizations (primarily corporations) are too hierarchical for his taste.³² His reliance upon economic growth, moreover, seems totally out of the question to me. I think, moreover, he tends to minimize the importance of the evidence he assembles. The World Health Organization, e.g., adopts certain regulations which are automatically binding unless explicitly rejected by members within a given time period,³³ another version of the "consensus" outlined above, and one which does not depend upon "up-down" voting processes.

Let me attempt to state the problem as clearly as I can, not by way of attacking Jacobson's thesis as such, but to point out the nature of the decision-making problem. As he notes, the most effective decisions are made by administrators who function in somewhat nonhierarchical, consensus-building

environments, but their positions are legitimized only by virtue of being appointed by higher-level political agents. The bodies in which the political agents function are likely to be representative, and this appears to be somewhat less hierarchical than bureaucratic environments. Actually, decisions in bureaucratic environments are likely to be arrived at through consensus approaches, although consensus seldom is the formal decision method, while decisions in representative bodies can only be made in hierarchical fashion. The trick is to fashion an organizational world in which the consensus approach becomes formalized, so that what is now going on in some international organizations is the most hopeful development I have yet to come across. Unfortunately, hardly anyone yet realizes that this form of decision-making is essentially incompatible with representative government.

As an organization theorist who, having been trained as a normal political scientist, later came to identify the decision-making processes of politics as merely systematic repression, my experience leads me to conclude that some processes I approved in earlier years no longer warrant approval. In my studies of air transport policy, my initial entry point into the world of international organizations, I was at first inclined to favor "free competition" among the world's airlines, but I found that we initially advocated the position at the end of World War II because we had so many left-over military transports we envisioned an easy and early capture of world markets. I thought at first that it was undesirable to permit the International Air Transport Association to set fares only by unanimous agreement, but then I learned how important airlines were to the countries sponsoring them. Later, I learned that not only did the International Civil Aviation Organization use a similar form of consensus decision-making to advance safety standards around the globe, but it

also quietly ignored the temporary political passions at work in the General Assembly, as when it took no action to expel Franco's Spain from its ranks. I will not bore you here with my own visions of the necessary future of international air transport policy, mentioning only that it will have to be multinational and transnational, globally designed and planned, with a monopoly or "pooled" operation on every single route.³⁴

My final suggestions may seem organizationally insignificant on the one hand, and politically grandiose and absurd on the other. The steady progress of the concept of "consensus" must be accompanied, I think, by recognition that decision-making processes must be very carefully structured so as to make consensus decisions possible. This outcome cannot emerge from large groups trying to work things out in large auditoriums, nor can it be done effectively by using a single very small elite group. Larger councils, assemblies, or conferences, must be broken down into small groups of five or so members each, then arrangements must be made for overlapping memberships---in ways which resemble Rensis Likert's System 4 management designs. Those who function in such international organizations doubtless feel they need no assistance or instruction in these matters, but they have been steeped for so long in the importance of parliamentary procedures that they do not realize they are only now beginning to enter what might be called their democratic era. While I suggest they could use some help, I also enter an observation which is much more significant than it appears at first glance.

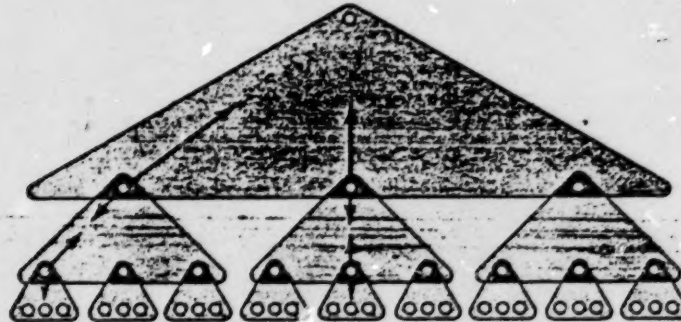
Those who teach the skills of small group decision-making tend to break large groups into smaller groups, ask these small groups to reach tentative conclusions, then reassemble in a larger meeting-place to "report" and "discuss" their varied conclusions. Even many of the teachers do not understand that

they do this primarily because they are limited in the instructional time available to them. Actually, decisions should never be reached in large assemblies, so that the point I make here will seem even more peculiar. The closest organization form we have to what is ultimately desirable is, in my view, the "mature" or "well-developed" bureaucracy, in which management spans-of-control average out to one supervisor/manager and four subordinates. The only defect in this arrangement is the superior-subordinate relationship, so that the most effective decision processes are those in which the designated supervisor adopts a management style in which s/he acts as though s/he were only one member of the group.

Since I also have argued this at some length,³⁵ I note here only that the simplest way to organize for the future is to take all existing bureaucracies and merely remove formal authority from the leader of each management group. The existing organization would then have to be connected through other linkages to other organizations, and to citizenries at large. My own favorite example of how group decision processes can work rather well is the Truman presidency of 1947-48, certainly recognized in the U. S. as the "golden years" of foreign-policy making. Few remember now that at the time, Truman was widely recognized as a "weak" president unlikely to be re-elected, a situation which left him no choice but to engage in a very wide consultative process as his own doctrine and the Marshall Plan were developed. Had he felt he "represented all the people," in the way presidents prefer to put it, and that he had a sufficient "mandate" to "go it alone," the outcomes would have been far less effective.

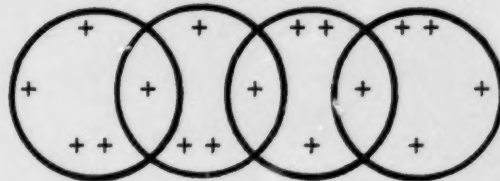
I can illustrate my point schematically by using as a point of departure the simplest design of Rensis Likert's "overlapping group" theory, in which each level of management is conceptualized as a group which overlaps other

groups, some individuals being designated as "linking-pins" who act as communications channels through which wider agreements are reached:³⁶



(The arrows indicate the linking-pin function)

To remove any vestige of authority simply transform the pyramids into circles and, to illustrate the revolutionary nature of this transformation, I merely remind you that to make this work, all individuals in each group, and therefore all individuals in all groups, would have to receive the same income or salary for their work.³⁷



In advancing this brief outline, I do not by any means seek to make a case for organization theory and theorists across the board. My greatest disappointment in this regard is that the bulk of theorists who advocate increased use of consensus-building approaches tend to focus upon what goes on within

single organizations (James Thompson is more an exception than the rule) but, more to the point, ignore such deeper issues as the relationship of work and income. The distribution of rewards and punishments is about as alienating a subject as one can imagine, and most authors seem to prefer not to mention it. Similarly, most (as in the case of Jacobson's book) tend to assume that continuous growth, and constant improvement in "productivity" (as conventionally defined) remain the fundamental purposes of all managers. Because we have deluded ourselves for so long, it is not yet apparent that if we are to conserve natural resources and preserve the environment, free-market approaches are out of the question.

I close by suggesting that time is indeed short. Limits to resources compel us to undertake massive redistribution almost immediately, since differential distributions are no longer justified.³⁸ The decision processes of which I speak cannot be expected to produce useful outcomes so long as the various actors in those processes have no choice but to compete with each other, up to and including war, for what they perceive to be the survival objective. I am not alone in suggesting that we face a direct nuclear confrontation with the Soviets before 1985, perhaps as early as 1982 or 1983, probably over the allocation of Middle East oil. As it stands now, the confrontation will begin on a gentle note; the Soviets merely will announce that they wish to purchase, at going rates, a given amount of that oil. This will put all of us in a situation where there are more customers ready and willing to pay than there is oil to meet their demands, and the rest of the scenario is easy to write.

It is simply a measure of the paradigmatic problem we face that even this is less recognized than it should be. While Jimmy Carter warned of the perils of nuclear war in his farewell speech, he nevertheless continued to imply that

military alternatives to it are still available. It seems obvious to me, especially when I combine my own military logistics experience with perusal of the energy situation, that large-scale conventional war is no longer possible. There is no need, therefore, to draft large numbers of young Americans in the expectation they may be needed to reinforce Western Europe in the event of a land war there. If the U. S. is to engage in any substantial war, it can be of only one type, and there can be only one such war. The choice is ours; we can either accept the need for global transformation or await the obliteration of at least the northern hemisphere.³⁹

In organizational terms, we have known throughout the period of civilization only two forms. We can name them centralized and decentralized management or, as some do, command and market systems. If there is a third alternative, it might be labeled not merely structured nonhierarchy but, in an attempt to be more specific, comprehensive global planning without centralized authority. If this seems impossible, so is survival. It is just barely possible that the sea-bed resource issue may make all of this obvious in a short time, in that once we begin regulating the production and sale of resources in the sea-bed, it will be clear that we must simultaneously regulate the land-based production and sale of the same resources. At the moment, time is not on our side, but one can hold out at least a modicum of hope.

Footnotes

1. Frederick C. Thayer, An End to Hierarchy & Competition: Administration in the Post-Affluent World (New York and London: Franklin Watts New Viewpoints, second edition, 1981).
2. William G. Scott, "Organization Theory: A Reassessment," Academy of Management Journal, 17, 2 (June, 1974), 242-254. At the risk of over-elaboration, I note that distinctions should be made between "systems theory" in the sense of what is known as General System(s) Theory (GST), an organic concept in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and must be perceived as an entity which has something of a biological existence of its own (apart from its members as individuals), and "systems analysis" which, beginning in the Pentagon, was and is merely another sophisticated managerial technique which emerges from the mechanistic and instrumental design of modern organizations. Initially a supporter of the GST approach, Scott still later concluded that organic theories can lead to such outcomes as German imperialism, and became an all-out supporter of modern individualism which, in its organizational form, is mechanistic. On his opposition to systems theory, see his "Organicism: The Moral Anesthetic of Management," Academy of Management Review, 4, 1 (1979), 21-28. On the all-out defense of individualism, see William G. Scott and David K. Hart, Organizational America: Can Individual Freedom Survive Within the Security It Promises? (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1979).
3. Christian fundamentalists, as I note later, argue that God created the human species at precisely this time a matter (I think) of high significance to the study of organizations and their individual members.
4. Richard E. Leakey and Roger Lewin, People of the Lake: Mankind and its Beginnings (Garden City: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1978).
5. I have argued this at length in "Organization Theory as Epistemology: Transcending Hierarchy and Objectivity," in Carl Bellone (ed), Organization Theory and the New Public Administration (Boston: Allyn Bacon, 1980). To put the argument another way, any theory of knowledge can be nothing more (or less) than a specified decision-making process for legitimizing truth within a given community, and there is no reason to assume any differences among scientific/intellectual and other organizations. After all, management in the modern world is presumably based upon scientific knowledge of how to manage.
6. The appropriate references are: Erich Fromm, To Have or To Be? (New York: Harper & Row, 1976); Frederick Herzberg, Work and the Nature of Man (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1966); Abraham Maslow, "The Superior Person," in W. G. Bennis (ed), American Bureaucracy (Chicago: Aldine, 1970); C. B. Macpherson, Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973); John Rawls, A Theory of Justice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971); and William G. Scott, "Organization Theory," op. cit.
7. Fromm, op. cit.

8. Claes G. Ryn, Democracy and the Ethical Life: A Philosophy of Politics and Community (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1978), pp. 53-54.
9. Bertell Ollman, Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society (Cambridge: University Press, 1971), Ch. 8-9.
10. It is worth recalling that the holy book of Islam, the Koran, remains the basic constitutional document in some nation-states, a reminder that whatever the supposed separation of Church and State in the West, the State does indeed legislate on moral questions. It is also worth noting that the moral laws in holy books were only the restatement as God's Laws of decisions earlier implemented as social or secular laws.
11. Stanley Milgram, Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).
12. See my "The President's Management 'Reforms': Theory X Triumphant, Public Administration Review, 38, 4 (July/August, 1978), 309-314.
13. "It ought...to be plain that command depends not on ownership but on the division of labor in detail...The command structure of a nationalized industry is, in essentials, no whit different from that of private industry, hedged about though it is by the trappings of constitutionalism (joint consultation). It is at last plain to see that capitalism in industry is one thing, command in industry quite another." Graham Wootton, Workers, Unions, and the State (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), Ch. III. Wootton's view is that Engels grasped this point, but Marx did not. I would add my view that alienation, as we understand it, will ultimately be defined as the outcome of hierarchy, so that we all have been alienated for at least 6000 years.
14. The U. S. Department of Justice produced in 1979 the best example of anti-trust theory carried to its logical conclusion. Under pressure from citizen groups and the Federal Communications Commission, the major television networks had agreed some years earlier to limit the amount of advertising in "prime-time" television hours (8-11 pm). The Justice Department argued this was an illegal act of collusion, then outlined its preferred solution: (1) networks should offer more time for advertising; (2) with more time available, this would lower the cost of each advertisement; (3) consumers would benefit from lower prices. While the argument acknowledged that consumers pay for advertising (a sort of unofficial tax levied by producers), the logical outcome would be to turn over all the time to advertising, driving down prices as much as possible. Completely overlooked was the need to arrive at standard practices if programs are to be shown more than once, or on more than one station, within predictable time periods.
15. It is seldom noticed that the standard decision-making model is identical with consumer choice in the market-place. If a decision-maker chooses the best available alternative means to achieve a given end or objective, the

consumer chooses the best available alternative product or service to meet a given want or demand. This means that a consumer should have available at the time of each choice more versions of a good or service than s/he wants or needs. The problem is that where some products or services are concerned, it is impossible to hold them in inventory until some consumer selects them. If a patient has a choice of five hospitals, the four s/he rejects are left with empty beds; the same is true in hotels, warehouses, and in such things as airline competition.

16. Robert A. Mundell, Man and Economics (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), p. 7.
17. This was the title of Richard Barnett's article in The New York Times, June 19, 1971.
18. Harold K. Jacobson, Networks of Interdependence: International Organizations and the Global Political System (New York: Knopf, 1979), p. 414.
19. Henry S. Kariel, Open Systems: Arenas for Political Action (Itasca, Ill.: Henry S. Peacock, 1969). A major corollary point in Kariel's argument is that "open systems" requires a turn away from specialization to generalism. This need not mean the demise of all expertise, but only the automatic assignment of authority on that basis.
20. James D. Thompson, Organizations in Action (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967).
21. James D. Thompson, "Social Interdependence, The Polity, the Public Administration," Administration & Society, 6, 1 (May, 1974), 15.
22. I do not pursue the argument here, but written language emerged only in connection with hierarchy. Since the purpose of written language, which likely is new language and not merely earlier spoken language reduced to writing, is the administrative control of large numbers of people, hierarchy is built into our language. It thus becomes difficult to describe or explain nonhierarchical phenomena or proposals.
23. United Nations. Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. Rules of Procedure (A/Conf.62/30/Rev. 2). New York, United Nations Publication, Sales No. E.76.I.4, 1976.
24. United Nations Law of the Sea Conference. "Break-Through Achieved in Sea Law Conference," Weekly News Summary, Press Release WS/987, 5 September 1980 (Mimeo).
25. P. H. Partridge, Consent and Consensus (New York: Praeger, 1971), p. 130.
26. See discussion of Carl Friedrich's views in *Ibid.*, pp. 54-92, 108.
27. On civil rights in organizations, see David W. Ewing, Freedom Inside the Organization: Bringing Civil Liberties to the Workplace (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977).
28. See my An End to Hierarchy, pp. 40-80.

29. On this approach, Follett's major work is The New State: Group Organization as the Solution of Popular Government (New York: Longmans Green, 5th ed., 1926).
30. Jacobson, op. cit., p. vii.
31. Ibid., 110, 126, 140.
32. Ibid., p. 12.
33. Ibid., pp. 89, 336.
34. See my Air Transport Policy and National Security: A Political, Economic, and Military Analysis (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), and "International Air Transport: A Microsystem in Need of New Approaches," International Organization, XXV, 4 (1971), 875-898.
35. An End to Hierarchy & Competition, Ch. 4-6.
36. In this original design, Likert used a schematic based upon a span-of-control of one manager and three subordinates. Interestingly, later publications of his Institute for Social Research indicated a span-of-control of 1/4.
37. For a schematic of how this might be applied to U. S. policy processes, see my An End to Hierarchy & Competition, Ch. 5. Those fascinated with the notion of paradigms, following from the work of Thomas Kuhn and his critics and supporters, may see this as a classic paradigm problem. If, e.g., one perceives a given part of any organization (any one group) to be operating effectively, the question is whether effectiveness is due to decisive leadership by the individual designated in charge, or effective group interaction and team decision-making. The answer is likely to correspond to whatever theory of decision-maker the observer holds or, in Kuhnian terms, the lenses through which s/he observes the phenomenon. The deeper problem is that even if decisions are made in a group setting, they are announced as though the designated leader made them. There is no way to test the efficacy of a group process without transforming all organizations everywhere.
38. Many cultures celebrate some version of the Robin Hood story, based upon the informal understanding that there is something inequitable about uneven distribution of resources. The argument might be made that all we need do is transform the Robin Hood myth into reality.
39. On the relation of energy limits and warfare, see my "Proliferation and the Future: Destruction or Transformation?" The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 430 (March, 1977), 133-146.